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TO A

PAMPHLET WRITTEN BY REV. E. W. GILBERT,

ON THE

Final Perseverance of the Saints

BY

A. J. W.



Toronto:

HUNTER, ROSE AND COMPANY.

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INTRODUCTION.

A Treatise, written by Rev. Eliphalet W. Gilbert, D.D., has fallen into my hands. This pamphlet contains what seem to me to be erroneous views of the plan of salvation. In this Treatise the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints is carried to an unwarrantable extreme. Believing there is danger of a judicial effect upon the minds of some who may read the views laid down in the pamphlet above mentioned, I feel anxious to compare those views with Scripture truth and sound judgment.

The Scriptures should not be taken with the intention of forcing certain passages to teach that which is abhorrent to reason and that which would make our Creator the author of all evil, which would also deprive Him of justice in the administration of His government.

A. J. W.

A REPLY.

[TO THE

PAMPHLET ON THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS,

WRITTEN BY REV. E. W. GILBERT, D.D.,

First extract from TREATISE :—

“By a ‘Saint’ is not meant a perfectly holy person, for there is not such a one on earth.”

REPLY.—A saint should be a holy person. Christ commanded His followers to be holy, and in His sermon on the mount He said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Christ has purchased a complete salvation from all sin. He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. We are told to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God; and we read, “Without holiness no man can see the Lord.” Death cannot make us holy. As the tree falls, so it must lie. As death leaves us, so judgment will find us.

TREATISE.—By a saint is understood a real Christian, one who has been born again.

REPLY.—One who has been born again will be regenerated. Those things which he once loved now he hates. Sin is distasteful to him, and he will flee from it. In such a person perfect sanctification is begun, and if he goes forward he will never backslide, or fall from grace.

TREATISE.—When we say that a saint will not fall away and be lost, we do not mean that this arises from anything in himself, but from the immutability of the purpose and promise of God. If left to himself the Christian would fall in a moment ; and hence arises the propriety of those cautions, warnings and exhortations against falling, which abound in the Word of God.

REPLY.—Did the immutability of the purpose and promise of God keep David from falling, or Solomon ? Have not many others fallen, notwithstanding the immutability of the purpose and promise of God ? If there was no danger of falling, why those warnings and exhortations ? God enters into a covenant with His people, but some individuals have broken the covenant, proving that there is still danger of falling from grace.

TREATISE.—When we say that a Christian will not fall from grace, we do not mean that it is impossible to lose many degrees of grace, or to be backsliders to a considerable extent ; for this we admit is a frequent occurrence, but that such will not fall entirely away, so as to lose all grace and perish eternally.

REPLY.—Solomon most certainly fell entirely away. If he had not fallen entirely away he would not have erected altars for idolatrous worship and have called all Israel to sin. We are told that God was angry with him, and nowhere do we read of his repentance. Solomon certainly lost all grace ; whether he perished or not we cannot tell, but it seems probable that he did.

Saul, the King of Israel, fell from grace, and was left to himself. The spirit of God forsook him on account of his wilful disobedience. Nowhere do we read of his repentance.

TREATISE.—The doctrine of election proves perseverance. I shall not here enter fully into this most unpopular subject, but shall content myself with observing that saints are elected unto salvation—of course, to perseverance.

REPLY.—Election of grace means the Gospel scheme by which sinners as well as saints are called. Christ died for all. As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 'The Spirit is given unto every man to profit withal, and if any are lost it will be because they grieve the Spirit and will not listen to His voice. Calvinistic election is deservedly unpopular. It robs God of His justice, and makes Him a respecter of persons which the Bible tells us He is not.

TREATISE.—According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy.

REPLY.—This passage proves nothing. God promised the sacrifice of His Son from the time of Adam's fall that the evil which had befallen the race might be remedied. God chooses all mankind, but all do not accept the choice which God has made. With reference to the latter clause, that we should be holy, there is no necessity for remark; most certainly we are all called to holiness.

TREATISE.—The elect can never be deceived or led astray. "Insomuch that if it were possible they should deceive the very elect." Does not this teach that it is impossible to deceive them so as to ruin them.

REPLY.—The elect or saints have been deceived, and led fatally astray. Solomon was, David was. The elect in the passage quoted above may have meant the angels; we read of the elect angels. They are beyond the power of deception. Certainly all Christians need to watch and pray lest they be led into temptation. We are told to be sober and vigilant, because our adversary, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

TREATISE.—Because at the day of judgment nothing shall be laid to their charge. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of

God's elect." Now, the Apostle, in the texts I have quoted, addresses all saints as elected, and of course teaches that all saints will persevere.

REPLY.—When any man comes to Christ for pardon all his sins are blotted out, and will not come up against him in the judgment day ; but if that man turn again to sin his past righteousness will not be remembered in his favour. Those who have their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb and who keep their robes washed, or, in other words, those who receive Christ as their constant Saviour, will be guiltless in the day of judgment : but all saints do not thus persevere. There are some who remain steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; but David did not, Solomon did not, many others have not.

TREATISE.—The doctrine of efficacious grace proves perseverance.

REPLY.—A remedy may be efficacious, but if not used it will not benefit experimentally. Grace is efficacious, but men must apply for it in order to receive benefit from it. How true the words : " I need Thee every hour." We must look unto Jesus, the Author, until He become the finisher of our faith. As the bitten Israelites looked at the brazen serpent we must continue to look unto Jesus. We must look until the end of life. If we cease to look we fall into sin.

TREATISE.—The manner in which a man is converted makes it probable that when once converted, he will never cease to be a Christian. His conversion is not of himself, if it were he might of himself go back again ; but his conversion is an act of Almighty power and sovereign grace.

REPLY.—Conversion is an act of Almighty power and sovereign grace, but it is brought about by man's choice, or by his application for the remedy. They that are whole need not a physician but they that are sick. They who feel that they are

sick, Christ is the great Physician of souls, and grace is the remedy which He applies to cure men of their sins.

God does not compel men to accept salvation. He has made them capable of exercising free will. Men are not mere machines, if they were they would not be accountable.

TREATISE.—Now, if God glorifies His power and grace in thus bringing a sinner to Himself; what good reason can be assigned for his ever casting him off.

REPLY.—God will not cast him off if he is faithful. If the Christian uses the armour of God he will gain the victory over his spiritual foes; if he does not use the armour he will fall a victim to their power. "God will help those who help themselves," is true in grace as well as in temporal affairs.

TREATISE.—No man can come unto Me except the Father draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

REPLY.—God the Father draws sinners as well as saints. The Spirit is given unto every man to profit withal; but sinners grieve the Spirit.

The promise to raise up at the last day is conditional like all other personal promises. Its fulfilment depends on the man's fitness for heaven.

TREATISE.—As the term "life" in the New Testament does not mean mere existence but happiness, so the resurrection generally means the resurrection of the righteous.

REPLY.—The righteous only look forward to resurrection with pleasure; but we are informed that all who are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and others to the resurrection of damnation.

TREATISE.—Our Lord, therefore, promises that He will grant eternal salvation to those who are thus drawn to Him by the Father.

REPLY.—If those who are drawn accept of Christ as their Saviour and remain in the liberty wherewith Christ made them

free, most assuredly they will have the resurrection of the righteous, but if they grow weary in well doing and turn again to the beggarly elements of the world, they forfeit their claim to the resurrection of the righteous.

TREATISE.—The nature of the Covenant of Grace and the character of our surety.

From the fifth of Romans it is evident that God hath made two covenants with man, the first with Adam for himself and all his posterity ; the second with Christ for Himself and all His people. The design of the second covenant was to remedy the defect of the first.

REPLY.—The first covenant was for all posterity. The second covenant was for all posterity. God has given to all mankind a covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, who died for the sins of the whole world ; but that covenant is made available only by complying with the conditions of the same ; which all do not, if they did all would be saved.

TREATISE.—Our surety in the first covenant was frail and fallible ; our surety in the present “infallible.” Under the first covenant the conditions were never performed and the blessings were lost.

REPLY.—So also in the second covenant notwithstanding its infallibility. The covenant applies to all the human race, but many do not accept the blessings of the covenant. Every unsaved person loses the blessings of the covenant, and even those who were partakers of the blessings have sometimes lost them. David lost the blessings of the covenant which implies freedom from the transgression. Solomon lost the blessings of the covenant.

TREATISE.—If the conditions of the covenant were yet to be fulfilled ; if salvation depended on their faithfulness,—there would indeed be great uncertainty as to the salvation of the saints. But since our surety has performed all the conditions,

the Father will not break His covenant with the Son by refusing to save every individual of His people.

REPLY.—A covenant is a contract between two parties. God made a covenant with Adam, but Adam broke his part of the contract. The covenant of grace is subject to conditions on the part of those who enter into the covenant; if not, it would not be a covenant at all. The Christian takes God as the bridegroom of the soul to love and serve while time shall last. If the Christian is allured by the world and ceases to love and serve God, then the contract or covenant is broken, not by God but by the backslidden Christian.

TREATISE.—In short the whole comes to this: your salvation, O Christian, depends on Christ's faithfulness or your faithfulness, or both. If it depends on your faithfulness you are lost. If on Christ's you are safe, for He is faithful who has promised. If He has promised to be faithful to you only so long as you are faithful to Him, then the whole depends on your faithfulness at last. And in this case you are worse off than before the fall, for then you had a surety in Adam who was perfect and not likely to fall, but now you have yourself for a surety, and are sure to come short and perish.

REPLY.—The salvation of the Christian depends in the first place on the death and sacrifice of Christ. If Christ had not died there would have been no remission of sins. Christ has purchased free and full salvation, and this salvation is received by forsaking sin and accepting Christ, therefore the Christian must continue to forsake sin and cleave to Christ. God gives wisdom and strength to those who ask for it, and he has not sent us on a warfare without providing weapons for us that we may overcome our spiritual foes. If we do not use the weapons we will surely fall victims to fiendish malice.

Because Christ died we may approach a throne of grace with boldness that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in

every time of need. There cannot be salvation independent of Christ, neither can there be salvation independent of man's agency. We are co-workers with God. Christ is the foundation of our hope. It is for us to build upon the foundation. The foundation standeth sure but what of that if we do not build thereon. If our spiritual structure is not formed, and beautified we will be paupers in the judgment day.

TREATISE.—Ah, but says an objector, "Though Christ will not cast him out, he may cast himself out."

REPLY.—"If any man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered &c." "If ye love Me keep my commandments." "The angels which keep not their first estate are now in everlasting torment. Because of unbelief they were cut off and ye stand by faith;" "be not highminded, but fear," so said Paul to the Gentiles, when speaking of the Jews who were once the peculiar people of God. There is conclusive evidence that men may be cast off, or cast out, because of unbelief and disobedience. How does this agree with Calvinism?

TREATISE.—But Christ says I should lose nothing, and adds the promise before explained. "And I will raise him up at the last day." Now, if you would duly appreciate the weight of this argument bring up all the objections you have ever heard. Perseverance is inconsistent with free agency—tends to licentiousness, inconsistent with cautions, warnings, falls of Christians, apostacies, &c., bring them all to bear on this simple text, and you will find them like snow balls pelting a wall of brass or like noisy waves dashing and breaking on a rock.

REPLY.—Christ loses nothing of His personal purity and glory, and even if Christians apostatize He loses nothing because God is ever the same glorious in holiness and power, but in another sense Christ has lost much, God has lost much. All disobedience and unbelief robs God of the honour due to Him, and heaven has been robbed of many souls through the un-

faithfulness of pastors and the unfaithfulness of professing Christians.

Pastors have seen the wolf coming and warned not the people, and God says, he will require the blood of the slain at the watchman's hand.

The promise to raise up at the last day to a resurrection of happiness is subject to conditions as all promises of a personal character are, "All who are pure in heart shall see God, and inherit the kingdom of God."

Is it likely that Solomon went to heaven in his idolatry and licentiousness. "There shall not enter therein anything that defileth."

Perseverance is not inconsistent with free agency, when that agency is brought into conformity to the Divine will and kept there. There is a possibility of continual and final perseverance; but there is also a possibility of falling from grace. To say that Solomon did not fall from grace would be absurd in the extreme. "All who fall into sin are under the dominion of sin, and to whom they yield themselves to obey his servants they are."

TREATISE.—"All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me."

REPLY.—In a general sense, the Father has given the whole world to Christ, but in a special sense those who accept Christ as their Saviour are given to Him by God the Father. All who are given to Christ in the general sense do not come, do not accept salvation, and only those who do accept salvation belong to Christ in a special sense. These God gives to Christ and they come unto Him. They come unto Him every day. They continually come to Him.

TREATISE.—Saints are Christ's sheep and shall never perish. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

REPLY.—“In reference to Christ laying down his life for the sheep,” the following passage will prove that those who are not included in the number of saints are Christ’s sheep also. “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold : them I must bring,” &c. This passage has reference to the Gentiles, who at that time were unconverted. In Isaiah, we read, “All we like sheep have gone astray.” This has reference to all men in their natural state.

In a special sense, Christians or saints are Christ’s sheep, and they shall never perish “if they stay in the Gospel fold.” “If they leave the fold they may perish.” Reason if nothing more should teach us this.

Do Calvinists tell us Christ’s sheep cannot wander from the fold. There has been demonstration to the contrary.

TREATISE.—“My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me : and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish ; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

REPLY.—Christ’s sheep do hear His voice and follow Him, and so long as they continue to follow Him they have the title to “eternal life,” neither can any pluck them out of Christ’s hand. While they continue to exercise faith in Christ, and use the grace given to them, pressing towards the mark for the prize of their high calling, no power in earth or hell can pluck them out of Christ’s hand ; but if they cease to exercise faith, they lose the grasp of Christ’s hand. “Eternal life is the prize of our high calling. The prize is not given until the end of the race.” Christians or saints receive spiritual life in this world, which is as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. While saints draw water from the wells of salvation, they replenish the well in their soul ; if they cease to draw from the great fountain or well, then the well in the soul be-

comes dry and cannot "spring up into everlasting life." No power can pluck the sheep from the Father and the Son, except their own transgression and unbelief.

TREATISE.—Christ knows His people before their conversion. Speaking of the yet unconverted Gentiles, He says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring."

REPLY.—No doubt Christ knows His people before their conversion; He also knows all the sinners who are never converted; not in reference to intimate friendship, but He is acquainted with all their ways, and He endeavours to bring them to a saving knowledge of the truth. Why did Christ weep over Jerusalem, and say, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not?" God knows the circumstances and the abode of sinners, but in a more special sense He knows those who trust Him.

TREATISE.—The conversion of His people is certain and infallible. "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice."

REPLY.—"Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice," was spoken of the Gentiles as a nation. They should all hear Christ's voice from His word, and also by the inward voice of the Divine Spirit which is given to every man to profit withal. Those who listened to the voice and obeyed its dictates would be admitted into close communion with God.

TREATISE.—Well, suppose they are called and become Christians, will they persevere, or shall they be left to perish? Hearken, Christ secures to them "eternal life." Observe, He does not say "will give if you persevere," &c., but I give now immediately.

REPLY.—According to this theory, then, David had "eternal life," when he wickedly sinned, and Solomon also. What a dangerous and inconsistent doctrine. In the Bible the future

is often spoken of in the present tense. The end of the world is spoken of as being nigh at hand, and in Revelations we read, "Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." If God had decreed that a particular crown should be given to a particular man, no other man could possibly take it. So much about the inconsistent doctrine of decrees.

KING DAVID AND ETERNAL LIFE IN THIS WORLD.

Had David "eternal life," when he wickedly strayed;
 When another man's wife he took, to infidelity betrayed;
 When her husband he sent to the war to be slain,
 Did David fall from grace, or in grace remain?
 He surely fell from grace to depths of lowest sin,
 Then tell us not he was God's child all pure within;
 To Satan he had listened, and thus he fell
 From salvation pure and high to lowest hell;
 A hell of iniquity in this world, to rebels known,
 From which they may be extricated by God alone!
 Yes, David fell most sadly—fell from salvation's power,
 "Because in God he ceased to trust each passing hour;"
 Behold him afterwards weep, and mourn in agony,
 His transgressions he now confesses most willingly.
 Wash me, he cries, blot out my sins like crimson deep,
 O, purge me from my sinful stains, my eyes must weep;
 Restore to me again Thy favour and Thy smile,
 May sin never again come to me, my soul defile.
 Then will I teach transgressors Thy pleasant ways,
 In serving Thee I will pass all my remaining days.
 Then God forgave him, and he his promise kept,
 Until called from earth away he quietly slept;
 But only his body thus did lie lonely and still,
 His soul to paradise went to do God's will.

TREATISE.—"Objection." Hearing Christ and following Him are conditions of becoming His sheep. Ans. "No, for they were His sheep before they heard and followed Him."

REPLY.—Hearing Christ and following Him are certainly the conditions of being saved sheep in the gospel fold "or the elect sheep," if you choose to call them thus. Before they heard and followed they were no more Christ's sheep than others who do not hear and follow.

TREATISE.—Call them conditions or what you will, they do not make perseverance doubtful; because they will certainly

take place, for Christ has promised they "shall hear" and "be brought."

REPLY.—Leaving free will out of the question, you mean "they shall hear and be brought." The height of inconsistency. God never compels men to accept salvation. Men are free agents and accountable beings. They have the power of choice; but you have misapplied the passage above quoted which had reference to the unconverted Gentiles. It was true they should hear the Gospel and be brought under the influence of the Gospel dispensation, but none of them would be compelled to receive Christ as a personal Saviour, that would be left to their own judgment.

TREATISE.—The prayer of Christ for all saints secures their salvation. John xvii. 9, 20: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which Thou hast given Me." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which believe on Me through their word."

REPLY.—At this particular time Christ prayed for His disciples, and for those who should believe through their word, meaning all true Christians to the end of time; but did He never pray for those not numbered with "the elect" or saints; most certainly He did. Christ prayed for His murderers. He said, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." When our Saviour spent long nights in prayer, is it probable that He only prayed for those whom Calvinists call "the elect?" No doubt He prayed for a lost world. Christ now pleads for the impenitent sinner.

Christ prays for saints and sinners; but His prayers will not ensure their salvation if they do not pray themselves, and continue to pray.

Prayer is the atmosphere in which the Christian lives—

"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Then let them watch and pray unceasingly ; although, not always on their knees, the heart may be always in a prayerful frame.

TREATISE.—The chain of salvation proves it. Rom. viii. 30 : “ Whom He did predestinate, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Here predestination, calling justification and glorification are represented as so many links of an Almighty chain, if there be any meaning in the Apostle’s argument, the predestination of a person insures his calling (*i. e.* his effectual calling or conversion) ; his calling insures justification, and his justification insures his glorification. Here is a strong tower into which the Calvinist runs, and is safe. Men may rail, but no argument formed against it can prosper.

REPLY.—The chain spoken of is the true gospel chain, not one link is left out, and bless God many have possessed the whole chain ; but predestination does not insure the succeeding parts of the chain. God predestinated Adam to holiness but he fell. God the Father, through the sacrifice of His Son, predestinates all our fallen race to eternal life, but they cannot have eternal life without submitting to the conditions of salvation. God has predestinated the holiness of all who are of the number of the “ elect sheep,” but are they all holy ? It is not true that calling insures justification, because all are called but few are chosen (because they will not be chosen, will not submit to the conditions), neither does justification insure glorification. Solomon was justified at one time, but we have no proof that he was glorified.

The links of the chain may be broken in personal experience, “ but the Gospel chain itself can never be broken.” This is God’s purpose “ to justify and glorify,” and therefore He calls all men to come to the waters. “ Ho every one that thirsteth

come to the waters." Do not tell us all men are not thirsty. All men have a thirst which they do not fully understand, a craving after some satisfactory principle, and for this reason they sometimes rush into sin to overcome the craving,

Heathen nations are thirsty, and for this reason they worship idols and institute false religions. The love of God alone can satisfy universal craving.

TREATISE.—Because nothing shall separate Christians from the love of God in Christ Jesus—Rom. viii. 35-38. What shall separate us from the love of Christ? The Apostle challenges to name anything which shall prevent final salvation, and then adds, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." From which it is evident—1. God loves His people with an unchangeable love. 2. One reason why Christians are never separated from His love is, that they are loved not for their own sakes (not chosen for their merits, nor rejected for their sins), for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord.

REPLY.—The apostle has reference to the love which Christians have for God, as well as the love which God has for the Christian. It was stated before in our replies, that nothing except personal unbelief and disobedience can separate the Christian from the love of God. Nothing outside of the man can compel him to sin without the admission of his own will; but the Apostle refers to present and future salvation, there is no special reference to final salvation. The apostle speaks of present Christian experience, and future Christian experience. He does not mean that they shall fall into sin for a time and be saved finally. He speaks of continual perseverance.

God loves His people with an unchangeable love, but when a man wilfully sins he forsakes God, who becomes grieved, and

will certainly cast him off if he does not repent. The Jews were rejected for their sins. If the righteous man turn from his righteousness, his past righteousness will not be remembered in his favour. We read in Revelations "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

TREATISE.—God will give us grace equal to our day. God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, &c.

REPLY.—Why was David tempted more than he was able to bear? Why was Solomon tempted more than he was able to bear? Why did Peter deny his Lord? Ans. Because they ceased to pray for and believe in the power of God. God was faithful; but they were unfaithful. The foregoing promise is conditional, like all other personal promises.

TREATISE.—Because God hath made the decree of salvation "immutable" for this very purpose, that His saints may have strong consolation and an anchor to their souls: Heb. vi. 17, 18: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things (His word and His oath), in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast," &c.

REPLY.—God cannot lie, and He will keep every promise which He ever made; but He never promised to save men irrespective of personal exertion. All through the Word of God we are distinctly taught that man is an accountable being; he is responsible for the character of his life, and he shall be rewarded according to his words and works. All in their natural state are under condemnation. Grace is free for all who will accept it; and the passage quoted above is for the sinner also

if he will forsake his sins. God does not make unconditional promises.

TREATISE.—Objection. He only promises to be faithful in case we are faithful. Ans. Not to say that Christ, our surety, secures our faithfulness, so that we should be in no danger even on that supposition.

REPLY.—According to your theory, man is a mere machine, without judgment or responsibility. God does all, men do nothing, to secure their salvation. Why are men admonished to work out their salvation with fear and trembling? Why are we told that faith without works is dead? Why should God single out a few unworthy mortals for salvation here and eternal life hereafter and leave the rest to perish? Why should God keep a book of remembrance and judge men according to their works? If salvation is all of God, and men have nothing to do, why punish men for their sins (those who do not belong to the few favoured ones). Tell us not that this is so. "It dishonours God." It makes Him unreasonable and partial. It takes away all the beauty of God's character. It is not a Bible doctrine—it is a doctrine of devils.

TREATISE.—Because saints are kept, by the power of God through faith unto salvation.—1 Pet. i. 2.

REPLY.—Satan could quote Scripture, and sometimes confound himself by so doing; so can Calvinists. How are Christians kept? Ans. By the power of God through faith unto salvation. What brings the power of God to the Christian? Ans. "Faith." The Christian is kept, by the power of God, "through faith" unto salvation. Who exercises the faith—God or the Christian? Ans. The Christian, most certainly. It is faith which brings the power of God and salvation. What does salvation imply? Ans. "Deliverance from sin." Then tell us not that David had salvation at the time in which he sinned.

TREATISE.—Because grace abideth in believers and makes it impossible to sin fatally or unto death. 1 John iii. 8 : "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth on him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

REPLY.—The foregoing passage says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (of any kind, or wilful sin)." No reference is made to "fatal sin" or "sin unto death." Does this passage mean that when once in grace men are always in grace, no matter how contradictory their lives ? "Not at all." While the Christian retains adoption and regeneration he cannot commit sin ; because he is born of God, because the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart ; but he may yield to unbelief ; he may grieve the Holy Spirit through unwatchfulness and prayerlessness and thus he will fall into sin as David did, as Peter did, as Solomon did, and many others have done. The seed remains in the Christian's heart if he does not choke it with weeds.

TREATISE.—Now we must evidently except sins of infirmity, deficiency, and partial captivities to the law of sin, or we contradict the whole Bible, and make the Apostle contradict what he said just before, "If any man say I have no sin he deceiveth himself, &c."

REPLY.—It is a question whether there are sins of infirmity and deficiency in the genuine Christian. God has commanded us to be holy and He will give the power to obey the command if we seek for the power. Sin is the transgression of the law and grace can overcome in Christ all that was lost in Adam. The Apostle means exactly what he says in the preceding passage, "Doth not commit sin (wilful transgression of any kind)." The passage "If any man say I have no sin he deceiveth himself" has reference "to the natural man" and the Christian looks back to his natural state of waywardness with penitence.

The Apostle goes on to say "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from

all unrighteousness." Maric, ' And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' To cleanse us from every inclination to sin, to take away all inbred sin and make us pure in heart that we may "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." There is no boundary to God's salvation. It will enable men who are naturally sinful to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. To do the will of God as angels do in heaven. Let Calvinists not talk about the finished work of Christ until they can grasp this idea of holiness and come up to the gospel standard. Let them not tell us that men may live in sin and be sanctified at death.

The blessings of salvation are for this life, but the prize, viz. "Eternal Life" is for the next.

TREATISE.—So far from sin driving grace from the heart, as our opponents so frequently assert, it appears from this that grace is the conqueror, and drives sin from the heart, and thus makes the believer's fall impossible. "His seed remaineth in him."

REPLY.—Grace may be the conqueror (glorious truth) but is it always the conqueror. Was it in David's case and Solomon's and others too numerous to mention. As long as God's grace reigns, the believer cannot fall; but when unbelief takes the place of faith, then the former believer does fall. The good seed is choked by weeds and ceases to live and bring forth fruit.

TREATISE.—The argument proves too much, even that believers have no sin of any kind? Ans. "No; it only proves that they do not live in a course of sin, that they do not follow sin as a trade, nor work evil.

REPLY.—They do not follow sin as a trade or work evil. Take care, O Calvinists, that your part is not taken out of the book of life. What right have you to say that is the meaning of the text "Doth not commit sin?" &c. Mark "They do not

follow sin as a trade or work evil." Perhaps they do not lie or steal or commit murder, &c. What imbecility! Has your Calvinistic grace come to this?

TREATISE.—Objection. "The text simply means we should not sin." Ans. Where then is the force of the reason assigned for not committing sin, "for his seed remaineth in him?" "The apostle evidently meant to assert the impossibility of a saint ever falling from grace so as to be entirely devoted to sin."

REPLY.—So as to fall entirely and be more devoted to sin than Solomon was perhaps. Who can read such reasoning and not feel pity for Calvinistic blockheads.

TREATISE.—We receive therefore the Spirit as the seal of salvation and God's earnest of heaven.

REPLY.—That is true we receive the seal, but may lose it if we do not take good care of it.

TREATISE.—Because believing is a proof that the believer has been ordained to eternal life "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

REPLY.—In another part of the Treatise you say, "Calling is a proof that they are ordained to eternal life." Both prove that men are ordained to "eternal life." Not eternal life here but hereafter. What does ordained mean? It does not mean predestinated. "It means set apart for some particular object." For instance ministers are ordained for the work of the ministry.

"As many as were ordained 'to eternal life' believed." The belief no doubt went before the ordination; it could not have been otherwise although the word ordained goes before the word "believed." Those men certainly took the first steps in the Christian life before they were ordained "to eternal life." No decree or predistination is here.

TREATISE.—The argument needs no application. Show me

one who has believed, and I will show you one who has been ordained to eternal life.

REPLY.—Certainly the belief is followed by the ordination, but is the ordination a decree, "Not at all" and they may forfeit their ordination. They may lose their office by unfaithfulness.

TREATISE.—"Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath (not shall have) everlasting life."

REPLY.—He that believeth has the title to everlasting life or the foretastes of everlasting life. If he remains faithful he will never lose his title to this inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away. Can you say that the Christian has received that inheritance in the world? In the Bible the present tense is often used instead of the future, yet in one sense the Christian may be said to have everlasting life because grace is the seed, and "eternal or everlasting life" may be the flower if the weeds of sin do not choke the seed or the plant in the soul. It is certain that David and Solomon allowed the weeds of sin to choke the seed. In David's heart the seed may not have become entirely extinct but there was no sign of the life-giving principle. In Solomon's heart the seed was certainly entirely dead.

TREATISE.—If men will still assert that our doctrines were first preached by Satan, that they came from hell, and will stake their soul's salvation, that men may fall from grace, we can only wonder at them and weep over them.

REPLY.—Certainly men may fall from grace and have often fallen from grace.

David assuredly fell from grace; he lost present salvation. Solomon fell from grace to deepest iniquity. Numerous instances could be given in which men have fallen from grace; men who were soundly converted at one time, whose life was a proof of the same (for by their fruits ye shall know them).

There is an awful possibility of falling from grace. The Jews fell from grace as a nation. A few accepted Christ as their Saviour, but the Jews, who were once the peculiar people of God, ceased to be the peculiar people of God on account of unbelief and disobedience.

TREATISE.—They may talk of their having been once Calvinists and of their having tried our system and rejected it. We say of these as the Apostle said of errorists in his day. "They were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us."

REPLY.—No doubt if they had been of you they would have remained with you ; however, it is not likely that their departure from you will prevent them from entering heaven.

TREATISE.—Apostates are generally spoken of as those who never had grace.

REPLY.—That is a contradiction in terms. A man must have something to apostatize from.

TREATISE.—Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him.

REPLY.—"And yet you say Christians cannot be free from sin ; but they must not follow sin as a trade," &c. How can you reconcile this ? "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." Had David never seen Him or known Him, or did David never sin ?

The meaning of the text appears to be that whosoever sinneth hath not seen the beauty of the Divine character, and hath not known the power of God's grace as he should have seen and known. Like the blind man, to whom Christ gave sight, he may have seen men like trees walking, but did not see distinctly. He may have been like those who took a peep into the gospel mirror, but not a sufficient look to remember what they saw for any length of time.

TREATISE.—He that doeth evil hath not seen God. Show me

a man who now lives in a course of habitual sin, who has no grace, and I will show you one that never had grace.

REPLY.—Then Solomon never had grace.

TREATISE.—Thus our Lord says of certain deceivers, "I never knew you." That is, "I not only do not know and own you now, but I never knew and owned you as My disciples."

REPLY.—There are self-deceivers, we do not deny, and we hope Calvinists will not be among them; but were David and Solomon and Peter self-deceivers? Not at all. The passage quoted above has reference to self-deceivers only. They are represented as a class. There are also hypocrites, who know that they are wrong, but try to deceive their fellow men. David, Solomon and Peter were not hypocrites. "They had been in grace and fell from grace."

TREATISE.—For if God has made no promise to keep us from falling, He may let us fall at one moment as well as at another, and even while the breath is leaving the body, Satan may assault, our faithfulness may fail, and from the very verge of heaven, with glory in view and angels waiting to receive and bid us welcome, we may drop forever.

REPLY.—God has promised to keep us from falling if we confide in Him; if we render Him our heart and obedient service; "but not otherwise." Arminians have as much faith in God as Calvinists, but it is a different kind of faith. We can claim every promise in the Bible which is given to console and establish Christians; but we have not the presumption to say that God will take us to heaven irrespective of personal effort. We know that we are not our own, that we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, wherefore we try to give God our reasonable service. And yet our salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. Christ is the only foundation of our hope. Bless God, He will never forsake those who trust Him.

Those who have living, active faith, which will cause them to crucify self and live for the honour of God.

God is all to the true believer. Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

TREATISE.—It is absurd to pray to God for perseverance, or to thank Him for the same. For, if God cannot cause us to persevere without destroying our free agency, and if our perseverance depends upon ourselves. I do not know why we should pray to God for influence which He cannot consistently grant, or ask assistance from anybody but ourselves.

REPLY.—Poor deluded man ! You seem to grope in the dark. Who said that God could not cause us to persevere without destroying our free agency ? Free agency may be brought into conformity to the Divine will. God will help those to persevere who are desirous of perseverance, who have the proper kind of desire to persevere, and manifest their desire by continually forsaking sin and cleaving to Christ. Our perseverance depends, in the first place, upon God, because He is the giver of every good desire. In the second place, our perseverance depends upon ourselves. We must cultivate good desires and also good deeds. We are co-workers with God. God will always help those who help themselves. If we do not persevere, it is our own fault. So tell us not that Arminians believe they can work out salvation. It is false. We are commanded to work, but after all, salvation is of God.

Rev. E. W. Gilbert gives popular objections to his own doctrine, and adds some of his own arguments to which I reply.

Objections to Calvinism—it is useless to notice much of what is said under this head, but a few extracts will be taken :

Objection xi.—"Salvation is everywhere offered on condition of perseverance, which shows that the condition may fail to be complied with." Ans. It shows no such thing ; but only that

unless the condition be complied with the blessing may be lost.

REPLY.—“Unless the condition be complied with the blessing may be lost.” Calvinists say the conditions must be complied with, and the blessing cannot be lost, notwithstanding proof to the contrary.

TREATISE.—*Objection xii.* “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they shall fall away,” &c., Heb. vi. 4-6.

The objectors must prove two things : first, that these were real Christians ; and secondly, that they really fell away. But in my opinion, neither of these things can be proved. I see no reason to believe them real saints.

REPLY.—If they were not real saints what could they fall from ? Do you say a mere profession. They had known something of the powers of the world to come.

The passage quoted above had reference to the converted Jews, who at one time had disbelieved in Christ as the True Mesisah, consequently if they fell away and again doubted the Christian faith, they could not be renewed unto repentance, because they would disbelieve in the only true sacrifice for sin, viz.: Christ Jesus ; and there could be no other sacrifice.

TREATISE.—In fact the whole is a solemn warning to persons who have been enlightened and convicted, not to stifle their convictions lest they commit the unpardonable sin.

REPLY.—The unpardonable sin is said to be of a different nature, viz.: Imputing the works of God's grace to Satan ; however, we will not disagree about the nature of the unpardonable sin, but it is plain the passage quoted in reference to falling, had no connection with persons only convicted of sin.

TREATISE.—*Objection xiii.* “A sinner may tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing,” &c., Heb. x. 29. From

which it is argued that a man may fall from sanctification and from saving grace. The whole, however, is a mere caution against apostacy from our professions, and does not teach that any will thus despise the blood of the covenant. If we sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, &c.

REPLY.—The words, “If we sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth,” had reference to the converted Jews. If they fell away to such an extent as to deny that Christ was the true Messiah, there could be no more sacrifice for sin. Ordinary backsliders may be reclaimed as David and Peter were.

TREATISE.—*Objection xv.*—“A man may escape the pollutions of the present world and afterwards fall away,” &c. 2 Pet. ii. 20. All this may be said of those who are only externally reformed from the infidelity, vice and immorality of the world, and have a speculative head knowledge of the way of righteousness. That such persons may and do fall away we do not doubt. That these persons were not changed in heart. That their nature never was renewed is evident from the comparison used by the Apostle on the subject. He compares them to a “sow that was washed returning to her wallowing in the mire.” The nature of the animal was not changed; though externally washed, her appetites remained the same; she was a sow still. Had her nature been changed to that of a sheep, she would never have returned.

REPLY.—2 Peter, 11, 20. “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein ‘and overcome,’ the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

Mark the next verse particularly, 21st verse. For it had been better for them not to have known “the way of righteousness”

than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment they have delivered unto them (22nd verse). But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb "The dog has turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Our Calvinistic brother did not quote the 21st verse. It was a little too strong for him, and he also misrepresented the 20th and 22nd verses.

How did they escape the pollutions of the world? Ans. "Through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Could it be said that they had escaped the pollutions of the world if they were only moral and retained an evil heart? Surely not the persons mentioned must have been justified and regenerated. It is evident from the first part of this chapter that Peter is warning his hearers against apostacy; he speaks of the angels who sinned and were cast down to hell; he speaks of the old world on which the flood came; he speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then for their encouragement in the way of righteousness he tells them, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, as He delivered Noah and Lot, and as He will always deliver His faithful followers; then he goes on to show the possibility of being entangled and overcome, plainly proving that although God was able and willing to keep them, there was need of great watchfulness and some effort of their own. Last of all he speaks of some who have fallen and says, "it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment given unto them. Then he says, "but it is happened unto them according to the true proverb," &c. He does not say they are dogs or sows, but it is happened unto them as unto a dog or sow. The mire represents sin. Sin is always repre

sented as something odious in the extreme, hence the comparison.

Our learned brother tells us that the figure used indicates that the persons were still unclean after they had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We say the strain of the discourse proves they were real Christians justified and regenerated.

He says the sow was a sow still ; if it had become a sheep it would not have returned to the mire.

Do sheep never get into the mire ? Was David a sheep ? How did he get into the mire ? Was Solomon a sheep ? He was covered with the mire. Was Peter a sheep ? He had a plunge into the ditch also, and many others we read of. It seems sheep sometimes get into mire as well as the sow

Is our Calvinistic brother a sheep ? He seems to us to have got into the mire too. He has got into it so deeply that his eyes are blinded to the real meaning of Gospel truth.

Hoping the ideas of the writer will be received in the proper spirit, and that our Calvinistic brothers may see their errors by being brought face to face with genuine Gospel truth, and that many may be prevented from embracing the dangerous Calvinistic creed, I will conclude my remarks with the fervent prayer that God may enable us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

A charge to keep I have,
 A God to glorify,
 A never-dying soul to save
 And fit it for the sky.
 To serve the present age,
 My calling to fulfil,
 O, may it all my powers engage
 To do my Master's will.
 Arm me with jealous care,
 As in thy sight to live,
 And O, Thy servant Lord prepare
 A strict account to give.

Deuteronomy xi. 26 : " Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse."

Read the following two verses in order to understand the comment which is taken from Clarke.

" If God had not put it in the power of His people either to obey or disobey ; if they had not had a free will, over which they had complete authority—could God with any propriety have given such precepts as these sanctioned with such promises and threatenings ? If they were not free agents they could not be punished for disobedience, nor could they, in any sense of the word, be rewarded for obedience.

" A stone is not rewardable because in obedience to the laws of gravitation, it always tends to the centre ; nor is it punishable because in being removed from that centre, in its tending or falling towards it again it takes away the life of man.

" That God has given man a free, self-determining will, which cannot be forced by any power but that which is Omnipotent, and which God Himself never will force, is declared in the most formal manner through the whole of the sacred writings. No argument can affect this, while the Bible is considered a Divine revelation ; no sophistry can explain away its evidence as long as the accountableness of man for his conduct is admitted, and as long as the eternal bonds of moral good and evil remain, and the essential distinctions between vice and virtue exist. If ye will obey (for God is ever ready to assist), ye shall live ; if ye will disobey and refuse the help, ye shall die. So hath Jehovah spoken, and man cannot reverse it."